

A HISTORY OF MINING ON THE KENAI PENINSULA. BY MARY J. BARRY. *Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1973. 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches, 214 pages, illustrated. \$7.20.*

The first discoveries of gold in what is now Alaska were made by the Russians in 1850, but they were more interested in furs than mining, so there was little done with gold until after the sale of the territory to the United States. After the discoveries of gold in southeastern Alaska in the 1880s, activity was renewed in the Kenai Peninsula in 1888, and by 1896 there were several thousand people mining and prospecting in the area. The rich discoveries in the Klondike overshadowed all other discoveries in the Alaska-Yukon area, and the majority of the men from the Kenai Peninsula, as well as other gold mining areas, went to the Klondike. So it is not surprising that very little has been written about mining in the Kenai Peninsula, even though the area produced significant amounts of gold over many years and had the first producing coal mine in what is now Alaska.

Mary Barry fills a major gap in the historical data on Alaska with her excellent history of mining on the Kenai Peninsula. Even though she had close personal knowledge of the area for many years, the extensive research that she obviously did makes her book very valuable. Besides the historical data and detailed facts on mining activities, Mrs. Barry includes sketches of many interesting characters that could be expanded into other books. I have never been sure whether mining attracted interesting characters or whether they are the type of people that were more adventuresome. In any event, the characters that explored and developed the Kenai area were of the same breed that explored in other parts of Alaska, and all of them played a most important part in the development of what is now the State of Alaska.

The mining historian might feel that Mrs. Barry has too many anecdotes about people, and the person reading for pleasure will undoubtedly feel there are too many facts, and I would have liked to see more stories about some of the people I knew personally — but one book cannot be all things to all people. Therefore, I recommend the book as being sufficiently factual for the historian, and interesting for the general reader.

Patrick H. O'Neill

CANADA 1896-1921: A NATION TRANSFORMED. BY ROBERT CRAIG BROWN and RAMSAY COOK. *Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974. 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches, 412 pages, illustrated. \$12.50.*

This is one of a succession of volumes being published under the general title of *The Canadian Centenary Series*. The project, under the editorship of W. L. Morton and D. G. Creighton, was inspired by Canada's hundredth anniversary and is the first general conspectus of the structure (physical, economic, social, political) and history of the country since the publication of *Canada and its Provinces* earlier in the century. If the other volumes maintain the admirable standard of *Canada 1896-1921*, their publication will constitute a national service.

The work of Professors Brown and Cook covers the period of Canadian history that recorded greater changes in the character of the country than is found in any other comparable quarter-century. Of course the scale of Canadian change and development was vastly greater in the decades after the Second World War, but the quality, nature and direction of Canadian life changed more radically in the earlier period. No other years witnessed such alterations in the country's international status, its social mores, its geographic and constitutional expansion, its racial admixture and, above all perhaps, its vision of itself as both a united and a fragmented people. These changes are recorded carefully, described graphically, and interpreted wisely by the authors.

It would also be difficult to find a better example than that provided by this book of the change that had taken place in the content of Canadian historical writing in the last couple of generations. Until comparatively recently, even the most ardent young Canadians were almost always bored by the lectures and the textbooks with which they were bombarded in school and college. Canadian history — the story of one of the most dynamic and fascinating of nations — was presented as a tiresome recital of comparatively unimportant military, political and constitutional conflicts and problems. The warm and exciting annals of the country's basic social and economic life were almost entirely ignored. The best of the present generation of Canadian historians, certainly including Brown and Cook, have avoided this mistake — to the great advantage of everyone.

As the book under review deals with a long series of important and highly controversial subjects, most readers would be inclined to argue about some details of the authors' decisions in matters of emphasis and proportion. In some cases many readers would have welcomed somewhat more emphatic opinions — on such matters, for example, as the Winnipeg strike, the Wartime Elections Act, the corruption that discoloured the civil service, the profiteering that took place during the First World War. Occasionally, one gets the impression that the authors have indulged in conscious restraint, perhaps with possible textbook sales in mind. These, however, are comparatively minor flaws in what is a solidly researched and skilfully written summary of this important era of Canada's national story.

With reference to the mechanics of the volume, certain failures should be noted. The most important of these is the wholly inadequate index. Over and over again when one is trying to relate events to each other, reference to the index provides no help whatever. It gives no real indication of either the scope or the detail of the work. Among scores of omissions are many important subjects (art, fisheries, irrigation, forestry, the C.C.F., aircraft). Names are overlooked and places are not mentioned (including, God help us, Ottawa!)

As distinguished historians, the general editors of the Series should revise their Introduction. The final paragraph, which refers to the authors of *Canada 1896-1921*, was apparently tacked on to an Introduction written for all the volumes in the Series. The Editors did not bother to re-read the earlier paragraphs in which they had declared that each volume "will be designed and executed by a single author" and that "each volume will have the unity and distinctive character of individual authorship". I have always thought of Ramsay Cook and Robert Craig Brown as discrete individuals. If they are not, let the mystery be elucidated.

Hugh L. Keenleyside

DAS TAGEBUCH DES MASCHINISTEN OTTO KRISCH: OSTERREICHISCH-UNGARISCHE NORDPOLEXPEDITION 1872-1874. BY EGON REICHHARDT. *Austria: Leykam-Verlag, 1973. 6¾ x 9½ inches, 121 pages. DM. 28, 70.*

This book is a direct transcription of the diary of Krisch, who was a member of the Austro-Hungarian North Polar Expedi-

tion from its beginning in 1872 to his death in 1873. The later fate of the expedition from the death of Krisch to the return of the participants in 1874 is described only very briefly.

The entry of nearly every day contains a short description of the weather, and the main activities on board. The entries about the weather have lost most of their interest, and are rather monotonous to read. The interesting part for all concerned with history and polar exploration is the very vivid picture the reader gets of the conditions on board ship, of the hardships and monotony as well as the entertainments. Krisch was certainly not a gifted writer, because no individual person on board becomes really alive. Even in the few episodes of a more personal note which he relates, only a few hints are given and nearly all is left to the reader's imagination.

But, it is perhaps just this inability, and his resort to the stereotyped phrases characteristic of his time, which creates in the reader a picture of an expedition 100 years ago.

E. Vowinckel

WAKE OF THE GREAT SEALERS. BY FARLEY MOWAT. *Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973. 10½ x 11¾ inches, illustrated. \$16.95.*

This sombrely illustrated account of sealing (swiling) in Newfoundland waters by Farley Mowat is the latest of his writings based on that island province. The history is effectively narrated in the first person, but there is occasional difficulty in determining if it is presented through the eyes of a sealer or a moralizing mainlander Mowat. Despite the author's efforts to answer the question, the reader is left wondering what motivated Newfoundlanders to challenge the sea of ice under such hazardous conditions. Perhaps to be a sealer permitted them to share an élan that drove "real men" to pay for a berth and face horrendous death, rather than remain ashore with the cripples.

The stark black-and-white illustrations by native Newfoundlander David Blackwood add to the feelings of admiration and rage one feels while reading this book.

This volume will stand as the most significant contribution to the wake held in memory of a type of man Canada's welfare state will never again produce.

Peter Davis